

REMARKS

Claims 5-8 and 10-13 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-4, 9, and 14-21 have been cancelled. Claims 5, 7, and 10 are independent.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 10-13 are allowed and that claims 5-8 recite allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including the features of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The above amendment accepts the Examiner's determination of allowability. Specifically, claims 5 and 7 have been rewritten into independent form including the features of the base claim 1 and intervening claims 2 and 3, respectively. All rejected claims have been cancelled. Thus, only the allowed subject matter is now pending in the above claims. Therefore, this application is clearly in condition for allowance and Applicants respectfully request an early indication therefore and a formal Notice of Allowance.

Art Rejections

Claim 21 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Normile (USP 6,028,965). Claims 1-2, 14-16, and 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Normile in view of Okada (USP 5,729,295). Claims 1, 3, 14-16, and 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Normile in view of Dunn (USP 6,356,664). Claims 4 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Normile in view of Stanger (USP 6,097,435). Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Normile, Stanger and further in view of Christian (USP 5,668,352). These rejections, insofar as they pertain to the presently pending claims, are respectfully traversed.

As indicated above, all of the rejected claims have been cancelled and the allowable claims have been rewritten into independent form. Thus, all of the prior art rejections are now clearly moot. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of all of the prior art rejections.

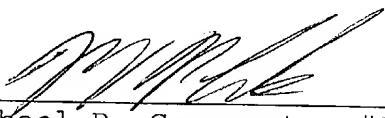
Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Michael R. Cammarata (Reg. No. 39,491 (at the telephone number of (703) 205-8000, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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